

Lesson 1 – Family

Let's begin our study of collocations by learning some common expressions about the family. Your parents and siblings (brothers and sisters) are your **immediate family** – and your **extended family** includes all your relatives – uncles, cousins, great-aunts, etc.

You can use a **family tree** to diagram the relationships among your **family members**. A person who is related to you by a long series of connections can be called a **distant relative**.

If you're lucky, you have a **loving family** or a **close-knit family** – these expressions refer to a family that has good relationships, where everyone loves each other and helps each other. If you were raised in a loving family, then you probably had a **carefree childhood** – that means you had nothing to worry about when you were young.

On the other hand, a family in which the relationships are bad or unhealthy can be called a **dysfunctional family**. If the children experience abuse, poverty, or problems with the law, we can say they had a **troubled childhood**.

Perhaps the parents went through a **bitter divorce** – that means a separation in which there were bad/angry feelings between the husband and wife. It's also possible to have a **messy divorce**, with a prolonged legal battle involving lots of conflicts about the separation of the former couple's assets (money and possessions). The decisions about the separation of assets are made in the **divorce settlement**. A family in which there are divorces or separations is sometimes called a **broken home**.

Sometimes the mother and father fight over **custody of the children** – that refers to who has the primary responsibility of caring for the kids. A judge can **grant joint custody** – that means the ex-husband and ex-wife share the responsibility – or **sole custody** to only one parent. For example, a judge might **award sole custody** to the mother, and the father has to **pay child support** – regular payments to help with expenses for the kids.

If it was a **mutual divorce/separation** – that means the ex-husband and ex-wife agreed to separate without fighting – then they will probably stay **on good terms with each other** (meaning to have a polite relationship without conflicts).

If a woman **gets pregnant** without being married or in a relationship, then she will become a **single mother**. Some women in this situation choose to **have an abortion**, and others prefer to **give the baby up for adoption**. The time when the baby is planned to arrive is called the **due date** – you can also say the **baby is due** in mid-October, for example.

After the woman **has the baby** (or **gives birth** to the baby), the baby is given to the **adoptive parents**, who will **raise the child** or **bring up the child** as if it was their own. Sometimes, when the **adopted child** is older, he or she tries to find their **birth mother** (biological mother).

Lesson 1 Quiz

Circle the best word to complete each sentence:

1. A friend of mine **gave / took / went** birth to her son at home with the help of a nurse.
2. A number of the kids in my classroom come from **broken / damaged / hurt** homes.
3. After a **hostile / cruel / bitter** divorce from his wife of 20 years, the actor married a woman young enough to be his daughter.
4. I see my **excepted / expanded / extended** family once a year, during our annual family vacation.
5. I was raised in a very **joyful / loving / tender** family, in which everyone helped each other.
6. I was **created / grown / raised** by my grandparents after my parents passed away.
7. I'm on good **friends / relations / terms** with all my former boyfriends.
8. John had a **carefree / careful / careless** childhood, growing up with happily married parents and three brothers.
9. Many women regret **giving / having / taking** an abortion years afterwards.
10. My aunt's going through a **messy / sloppy / untidy** divorce; she's paying a fortune in legal fees.
11. My husband doesn't get along with a few of my family **people / individuals / members**.
12. Although my salary is low, I get child **assistance / provision / support** from my ex-husband.
13. My sister **got / had / made** pregnant immediately after she got married.
14. My son is making a diagram of our family **roots / tree / web** for a school project.
15. My wife is pregnant with twins. They're **come / due / here** in February.
16. Sally was granted sole **custody / guardian / keeping** of the children from her first marriage.
17. Teenagers who had a **distressed / troubled / worsened** childhood often have behavior problems in school.
18. The celebrity wrote a book about his **debilitated / defective / dysfunctional** family.
19. The divorce **contract / reimbursement / settlement** awarded the wife \$500,000.
20. There are four people in my **close / immediate / neighboring** family.
21. They have three biological children and two **adopted / adoptive / adopting** children.

Lesson 1 Quiz Answers

1. A friend of mine **gave** birth to her son at home with the help of a nurse.
2. A number of the kids in my classroom come from **broken** homes.
3. After a **bitter** divorce from his wife of 20 years, the actor married a woman young enough to be his daughter.
4. I see my **extended** family once a year, during our annual family vacation.
5. I was raised in a very **loving** family, in which everyone helped each other.
6. I was **raised** by my grandparents after my parents passed away.
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18. The celebrity wrote a book about his **dysfunctional** family.
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20. There are four people in my **immediate** family.
21. They have three biological children and two **adopted** children.

Lesson 25 – Global Problems

In today's lesson, we'll focus on several major global problems.

One critical issue is **preserving** and **protecting the environment**. The burning of **fossil fuels** (*oil, coal, and natural gas*) produces **greenhouse gases** (*gases that heat up the atmosphere*) that **deplete the ozone layer** and result in **global warming** and **climate change** (*changes in the earth's temperature and weather patterns*).

Some scientists believe that we have already **done irreparable damage** to the planet, and now we are suffering the consequences of **rising sea levels** and increasingly frequent **natural disasters** such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and tornados. A number of **animal species have gone extinct**, and many more are **endangered**. To reverse this trend, we must invest in **clean energy** (*energy sources that do not pollute the environment*) with **renewable resources** (*elements like water and air, which can be re-used*) and utilize manufacturing methods that are not **harmful to the environment**.

There are still many regions of the world where children **die of hunger/starvation** (*die from not having enough food*). Unfortunately, **extreme poverty** is common in the rural areas of **developing countries**, where the population often suffers from **food shortages** (*not enough food*) and **lack of access to clean water**.

In the cities, **homeless people** sleep on the streets if there is not enough room in local **homeless shelters**. There are also many families **on the margins of society** (*outside the dominant society and culture*) who are **living below the poverty line** and struggle to make ends meet every month. Although many governments create **welfare programs** (*programs that give money to poor people*) to **alleviate poverty**, the widening gap between rich and poor suggests that poverty may never be completely eradicated.

Poverty and underdevelopment contribute to a host of additional problems as well. For example, many people die of **preventable diseases** because they have no access the **safe and effective vaccines** that exist. A number of large corporations use **child labor** in the manufacturing of their products, as poor families may feel they have no other option for survival. In addition, young women from **disadvantaged backgrounds** (*poor families and situations*) are prime targets for **human trafficking** and **sexual exploitation**.

Lesson 25 – Quiz

Read this debate between two politicians and fill in the gaps with the correct words:

alleviating	endangered	irreparable	shelters
clean	fossil	line	shortages
climate	harming	margins	warming
disadvantaged	hunger	renewable	welfare

Jim: If I'm elected, my number one priority will be _____ poverty. A large portion of our country's population lives below the poverty _____, and it's a fact that young people from _____ backgrounds are more likely to engage in criminal activity. My opponent, on the other hand, wants to cut funding for the _____ program and leave millions of people without help.

George: I believe it is a mistake to focus on our country alone; we must remember that we are part of a global community. Opening up more homeless _____ is not a long-term solution to help those on the _____ of society. However, investing in _____ energy will enable us to grow our economy without _____ the environment. This will benefit our country and our world.

Jim: That's a noble goal, but we have more pressing problems. I seriously doubt our citizens who are dying of _____ care about protecting _____ species and preventing global _____. Plus, it's not scientifically proven that humans can even cause _____ damage to the planet.

George: Don't you see that the two issues are related? Due to _____ change, the rain patterns have changed and our agricultural sector is not as strong as it once was. This results in food _____. It's only going to get worse unless we end our dependence on _____ fuels and start using _____ resources.

Lesson 25 – Quiz Answers

Jim: If I'm elected, my number one priority will be **alleviating** poverty. A large portion of our country's population lives below the poverty **line**, and it's a fact that young people from **disadvantaged** backgrounds are more likely to engage in criminal activity. My opponent, on the other hand, wants to cut funding for the **welfare** program and leave millions of people without help.

George: I believe it is a mistake to focus on our country alone; we must remember that we are part of a global community. Opening up more homeless **shelters** is not a long-term solution to help those on the **margins** of society. However, investing in **clean** energy will enable us to grow our economy without **harming** the environment. This will benefit our country and our world.

Jim: That's a noble goal, but we have more pressing problems. I seriously doubt our citizens who are dying of **hunger** care about protecting **endangered** species and preventing global **warming**. Plus, it's not scientifically proven that humans can even cause **irreparable** damage to the planet.

George: Don't you see that the two issues are related? Due to **climate** change, the rain patterns have changed and our agricultural sector is not as strong as it once was. This results in food **shortages**. It's only going to get worse unless we end our dependence on **fossil** fuels and start using **renewable** resources.

Lesson 39 – Success & Failure

Successful Samantha has a long list of **impressive accomplishments**. It seems like everything she does ends up being a **phenomenal success**. In her very first job, she created a **highly effective** way to motivate the company's employees, resulting in a **dramatic improvement** in workplace morale.

Now she's developing a system for real-time translation among 100 different languages. If she can pull it off, it'll be an **unprecedented success** (*success in something for the first time in history*) and the **crowning achievement** (*best or most significant achievement*) of her career.

So far, the program has enjoyed **modest success** (*some limited success*) but there is still **room for improvement** (*potential for improvement*). However, Samantha says that the team is **making good progress**, and that in the next month or two she hopes to **make a breakthrough** (*make a sudden advance in success, especially when you overcome an obstacle*).

Although Samantha is very ambitious, she's also a very likeable person. She **brings out the best** in other people, and quickly **wins the respect** of colleagues.

Samantha's brother, Disastrous Dan, is the opposite – everything he attempts seems to **fail miserably**. He wanted to be a doctor, but his teachers told him he wasn't smart enough, **dashing his hopes** (*making him abandon hope*) of a career in medicine. He had the opportunity to do a prestigious internship in another country, but he **lost his nerve** (*lost his courage*) and turned down the offer.

He then applied for various jobs, but **completely failed** to show up to the interviews on time. He was eventually hired, but later lost his job during an economic downturn due to his **mediocre performance** (*average work, not very special*) and total lack of **remarkable achievements**.

Dan then tried to start his own software company to compete with Samantha's; that was a **spectacular failure**. He invested his life savings in the business, despite all his friends telling him that it would be a **recipe for disaster** (*very likely to result in disaster*). His sales predictions were **way off the mark** (*completely inaccurate*), and the company **went under** (*lost all its money and shut down*) just eight months after it was founded.

Poor Dan – it seems like he's **doomed to failure** (*destined to be unsuccessful*). But **if all else fails** (*if everything is unsuccessful*), he can always move into Samantha's mansion **as a last resort** (*a final possibility*)!

Lesson 39 – Quiz

1. Edward certainly bet / took / won my respect when he turned down an unethical business deal.
2. Efforts to reduce teen pregnancy through better sex education have seen average / modest / ordinary success.
3. Getting a new haircut has made a crowning / dramatic / theatrical improvement in his overall appearance.
4. I made a real breakdown / breakover / breakthrough in my English when I started practicing listening more often.
5. I wanted to try waterskiing, but I lost my heart / nerve / spirit and ended up staying inside the boat.
6. I'm not a complete pacifist; I just believe war should be the last option / prospect / resort.
7. Immigration reform was the championing / charming / crowning achievement of the president's term in office.
8. My attempts at losing weight have failed inadequately / miserably / strongly - in fact, I've gained a few pounds!
9. My girlfriend really brings / gets / helps out the best in me - I'm a better person thanks to our relationship.
10. Putting inexperienced teachers into the country's worst schools is a method / program / recipe for disaster.
11. Researchers have invented a new, highly / richly / sharply effective treatment for leukemia.
12. The company's advertising campaign was a miraculous / spectacular / wonderful failure - it didn't attract a single new customer.
13. The new movie has been a mediocre / phenomenal / supernatural success, with billions of dollars in ticket sales.
14. There's a lot of area / room / space for improvement in his writing skills.
15. We thought the repairs on the car would cost about \$500, but our estimate was way off the mark / point / spot - it was \$4000.

Lesson 39 – Quiz Answers

1. Edward certainly **won** my respect when he turned down an unethical business deal.
2. Efforts to reduce teen pregnancy through better sex education have seen **modest** success.
3. Getting a new haircut has made a **dramatic** improvement in his overall appearance.
4. I made a real **breakthrough** in my English when I started practicing listening more often.
5. I wanted to try waterskiing, but I lost my **nerve** and ended up staying inside the boat.
6. I'm not a complete pacifist; I just believe war should be the last **resort**.
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Lesson 48 – Metaphor

A number of words in English are used metaphorically – with a meaning that is not exactly the same as their literal meaning. Usually they apply a quality of one word to another word. For example, when we say that something is **lightning fast**, we are using the quality of lightning (which is almost instantaneous) to describe something that is extremely fast.

Another example is **the root of the problem** – the literal meaning of the word “root” is the part of a plant or tree that is under the soil. The roots are what support and sustain the entire tree. Therefore, “the root of the problem” is the deepest, most basic or fundamental reason for the problem.

Many metaphors are related to elements in the natural world, such as light and dark, water, fire, and plants – in this lesson, you’ll learn 5 collocations in each category.

LIGHT AND DARK

- If someone’s **face** or **eyes light up**, it means that they suddenly get very happy or excited. You can also say someone’s **eyes are shining with delight**.
- The expression **lighten the mood** means to make a depressing atmosphere/situation more relaxed and happy.
- On the other hand, if someone’s **face/eyes/expression darkens**, it means that they suddenly appear sad or angry.
- **Dark days** or **dark times** refer to periods of time that are bad or unpleasant, full of problems

WATER

- You can say that **ideas are flowing** or **conversation is flowing** to describe when it is proceeding easily and naturally.
- Water metaphors are often used to describe the movement of groups of people – you can say that **people poured/streamed** into the stadium (to describe continuous movement of large groups of people) or that **people trickled** into the church (when only a few people come, occasionally).
- The expressions **waves of disappointment** or **waves of sadness** refer to strong feelings.

FIRE

- A **heated discussion** or **heated debate** is one that is very intense, often with negative emotions like anger.
- If someone has a **fiery temper**, it means that when they get angry, they get VERY angry, and could possibly explode. There’s also the expression **tempers flared** to describe a situation when people began to get angry.

- The verbs **kindle** and **spark** describe the act of starting fires. “Kindle” is usually used for starting positive things – something can **kindle interest/enthusiasm/hope** – and “spark” is usually used for starting negative things – something can **spark outrage/controversy**.

PLANTS

- It’s difficult for a plant to grow in soil that has a lot of rocks. So if something **gets off to a rocky start**, it means that it encountered many problems in the beginning.
- **Thorns** are the small, sharp growths that appear on some plants (such as roses). The expression **a thorny issue** describes a matter that is difficult, complicated, and possibly dangerous.
- The word “blossom” is used to describe when a flower appears and opens, revealing all its beauty. So if a **romance/friendship is blossoming**, then it is developing in a beautiful way.
- If your efforts begin to produce the desired results, we can say your **efforts are bearing fruit**.
- A seed represents something very small that can grow into something big. So if some event **plants seeds of hope / seeds of jealousy**, it means it produces a small feeling that can grow into a stronger emotion over time.

Lesson 48 – Quiz

1. A new TV show has sparked **argument / contention / controversy** by showing the positive side of dropping out of college.
2. A **flood / roll / wave** of disappointment came over me when I heard that the show had been canceled.
3. Having lots of pets as I was growing up **ignited / kindled / started** my interest in studying veterinary medicine.
4. Her face **lit / shone / turned** up when I asked her about the award she'd recently won.
5. I was thrilled to see a romance **blossoming / rooting / shining** between two of my best friends.
6. My grandmother remembers the **black / dark / shady** days of the civil war.
7. The boxer dodged his opponent's punch and threw a **lightning / streaming / thunder** fast counterattack.
8. The city's efforts to cut down on pollution are finally **bearing / growing / producing** fruit.
9. The legality of abortion is a **flowing / sharp / thorny** issue involving questions of human life, women's rights, and societal responsibility.
10. Hundreds of people **dripped / poured / trickled** into the store the moment the doors opened.

Lesson 48 – Quiz Answers

1. A new TV show has sparked **controversy** by showing the positive side of dropping out of college.
2. A **wave** of disappointment came over me when I heard that the show had been canceled.
3. Having lots of pets as I was growing up **kindled** my interest in studying veterinary medicine.
4. Her face **lit** up when I asked her about the award she'd recently won.
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